

Certification: Minutes approved at the January 17, 2004 HPAC Meeting, Sheraton Crescent Hotel, Phoenix, Arizona. Motion by Jim Jett, second by Brian Pinney, approved as presented by unanimous vote.

Heritage Fund Public Advisory Committee Meeting
Meeting Minutes
August 23, 2003
Arizona Game and Fish Wildlife Building
Phoenix, Arizona

Committee Members:

Joe Carter, Safford (Chairman) - Present
Greg Butler, Show Low - Present
Blaine Bickford, Springerville - Present
Frank Ronco, Jr., Flagstaff - Absent
Maggie Sacher, Marble Canyon - Present
Jim Jett, Kingman - Absent
Annette Morgan, Peach Springs - Present
Roberta McDermott, Yuma - Present

Valerie Morrill, Yuma - Present
Cindy Cartwright, Bisbee - Present
Dennis Ward, Willcox - Absent
Phil Smith, Mesa - Present
Jerry Nelson, Scottsdale - Present
Diane Drobka, Safford - Present
Brian Pinney, Chandler - Present
Margaret Bohannon, Scottsdale - Present

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1. **Call to Order and Opening Remarks:** Commissioner Joe Carter, Chairman called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.
 - a. Chairman Carter and the Committee congratulated Margaret Bohannon on her induction into the Arizona Outdoor Hall of Fame.
 - b. Chairman Carter commented on federal and state legislation and issues affecting the Heritage Fund. There are two forest health bills in Congress. The House bill (H.R. 1904) has passed the House but the Senate bill (S. 1449) needs nine to twelve more Senators on board for the bill to pass. The State Wildlife Grant (SWG) legislation will appropriate \$60 million (House version) and \$75 million (Senate version) of which the share for Arizona will be \$2.15 million.
 - c. The Chairman informed the Committee that the current Heritage grant cycle has an application deadline of November 28, 2003. The Department will send notice of the applications in early December in order for members to sign up for the grant scoring committees. Committee members need to have their names into Richard Maze by the end of December. The selected participants for the respective scoring committees will be announced at the January 17, 2004 meeting.

2. Introductions

- a. **Committee Members:** Chairman Carter asked Committee members to introduce themselves.
- b. **Department Representatives:** Steve Ferrell, Deputy Director introduced Department members present.
3. **Approval of Minutes from May 10, 2003:** Upon motion by Greg Butler, second by Bobbi McDermott, correction to the minutes that Maggie Sacher was present at the May meeting was unanimously approved.

4. **Call to the Public:** No one requested to be heard.

5. **Presenter:** Terry Johnson, Nongame Branch Chief, reported on the Mexican wolf reintroduction project, including a brief history of the formation and function of the Recovery Team and Reintroduction project. The intended partnership of the Fish and Wildlife Service, Arizona and New Mexico game and fish agencies, White Mountain Apache Tribe (WMAT), and cooperating

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counties has not materialized due to the issue of lead agency roles. Despite cooperative efforts by the joint Commission (NMDGF and AGFD), action to ensure a state role and functional participation, and subsequent commitment of support by the six cooperating counties (Friday, August 22 at the Department), the recovery program progress remains in flux due to confusion over who will be the decision-makers and who will be making recommendations. The ability of the Department to engage in the wolf reintroduction project is dependent on the cooperation, participation, and adaptive management planning of all parties.

Committee discussion followed on the status of the wolf population (60 to 65 including young), reintroduction goals, wolf biology and management issues, and cooperative planning. Diane Drobka asked about the role of the San Carlos Apache Tribe. Terry Johnson stated that the WMAT is currently a key participant; the San Carlos Apache Tribe is not now a formal participant due to complex cultural and funding issues and what role they will have. Maggie Sacher and Valerie Morrill expressed the need for the Service to be open and provide opportunity for public input. Blaine Bickford asked what costs the Department, the Service, and the tribes have incurred. Terry Johnson commented that the financial record of the Service and the Department is accurate. The Department has used Heritage funds for wolf management. The WMAT has largely relied on Service funding in its management role. The Forest Service budgeting and role are not as clearly identified in wolf recovery. Chairman Carter concluded discussion by commenting that trust and participation is key, all players need to be at the table in the planning process to avoid post-planning conflicts. The Chairman commented that the Committee and individual members should help in bolstering participation.

[Break]

6. **Presenter:** John Kennedy, Habitat Branch Chief, provided an update on the land acquisition process. In response to audit findings, the Department is streamlining but not changing the acquisition process, clarifying the role of the Commission in the process, and focusing on clear objectives and engaging proactive planning. A key recommendation is to prioritize potential acquisitions, emphasizing those with greater potential benefit to target species. Progress has been made toward identifying high-value fish and wildlife habitats in the state in the form of a state-wide GIS map with overlays: TNC Ecoregional Planning Areas, land ownership, perennial stream and wetland areas, Critical Habitat, and locality information on federally listed T/E species and wildlife of greatest conservation need.

Committee discussion focused on process streamlining and opportunities to maximize use of acquisition funds. Chairman Carter commented that the \$10.2 million fund sweep was a part of a general sweep, which consequently precluded purchases of sensitive habitat. In response to Brian Pinney's question, solicitation for properties is not allowed. Opportunities are identified through offers made to the Department; this applies to acquisition of property, water rights, and conservation easements. Diane Drobka asked if an MOU could be established allowing transfer of acquisition funds to the Conservation Fund. There are opportunities for maximizing use of funds but the best way is to streamline the process and write the check. Chairman Carter further commented that the Commission will be considering Department recommendations on streamlining

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the acquisition process and revising the Heritage Acquisition Policy to clear up confusion about purchases at the September Commission meeting.

7. **Presenter:** Richard Maze, Heritage Fund Administrator reported on the Heritage Grant awards for fiscal year 2004. Of the \$756,000 available for grant awards, \$542,500 was awarded for 21 grant projects. With the inclusion of matched funding, \$1.1 million of project benefit will be realized. The amount of Heritage Fund revenue received from the State Lottery for fiscal year 2003 is \$9.3 million. The grant workshop schedule, Committee participation, and forthcoming grant review were discussed. Members will be notified of the scoring committee schedule and number of applications for each grant funding-focus in early December.

Committee discussion: Maggie Sacher asked about the ratio of matched funding to Heritage awarded funding. The general ratio of grant-to-overall total project cost has averaged between 1.5 and 2.5 since 1992. Blaine Bickford requested that when notifying members about participating on the respective grant application scoring committees that the information should include a list of applications (applicant, title, grant request, and estimated total cost).

8. **Open Committee discussion**

- a. Meeting minutes: Upon motion by Margaret Bohannon, second by Roberta McDermott, the Committee approves keeping future meeting minutes to three pages, or less. Motion passed unanimously.
- b. Committee recommendation on the Mexican wolf project: The Chairman referenced the foregoing report and Committee discussion on the Mexican wolf reintroduction project. Upon motion by Phil Smith, second by Cindy Cartwright, the Committee recommends that the Commission direct the Department to continue a proactive role in moving toward adaptive management in its working with partners on the Mexican wolf project. Motion passed unanimously.
- c. Committee recommendation on the land acquisition policy: The Chairman referenced the foregoing report on the Heritage land acquisition process. Upon motion by Margaret Bohannon, second by Diane Drobka, the Committee recommends that the Commission provide the Department with additional tools (e.g. outsourcing) to help streamline the acquisition process to complete acquisitions expeditiously, and further urges the Commission to complete its review of the Department's recommendations for streamlining and accepting policy changes to address the acquisition process. Motion passed unanimously.

9. **Future Agenda items**

- a. The January 17th meeting will be held in Phoenix (TBA). Agenda topic: The Department Information and Education Division will present an overview on tools used for marketing the Heritage Fund Program followed by a Committee brainstorming session on outreach participation for promoting Heritage statewide.

10. **Adjournment:** Committee adjourned at 1:00 p.m.